

Legal Services Corporation (LSC)
Request for Proposals
To Evaluate LSC's Pro Bono Innovation Fund

I. Introduction

LSC was established by an act of Congress in 1974 to promote equal access to justice and to fund high-quality civil legal assistance to low-income Americans. It is the nation's largest single funder of civil legal aid, providing grants to 134 independent, non-profit organizations across the United States and its territories. Although federally funded and subject to congressional oversight, LSC is a private non-profit corporation, and is not a government agency.

As a grant making organization, LSC awards grants through a competitive process, conducts robust oversight of its grants, and offers extensive technical and programmatic assistance to grantees. More specifically, LSC conducts on-site compliance reviews to oversee compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements, as well as restrictions that accompany LSC funding; conducts reviews of grantee's fiscal policies and financial internal controls; and conducts program visits to assess program quality and make recommendations about grantee performance. LSC encourages grantees to leverage limited resources by seeking funding from other federal agencies, state, and local governments, Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) programs, access to justice commissions, the private bar, philanthropic foundations, and the business community. In addition, LSC encourages grantees to partner and collaborate with other stakeholders, including legal aid providers, the private bar, social service providers, and the judicial and business communities.

In March 2011, LSC's Board of Directors formed a Pro Bono Task Force to identify how to better engage pro bono lawyers so that more low-income Americans could be served. The Task Force included more than 60 distinguished leaders from the judiciary, major corporations, private practice, law schools, the federal government, the organized bar, pro bono programs, and the legal aid community. ([See a list of Pro Bono Task Force members.](#))

The Task Force issued a [comprehensive report and recommendations](#) in October 2012. The report provides a summary of findings that illustrate the current crisis in legal services and suggests ways that pro bono can be used to increase the supply of lawyers and others who are available to provide legal assistance. One of the Task Force's key recommendations was the creation of an Innovation Fund to encourage new ideas for engaging pro bono assistance to narrow the justice gap.

II. LSC's Pro Bono Innovation Fund

On January 17, 2014, President Obama signed Public Law 113-76, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014, which included \$2.5 million for LSC's a new grant program called the Pro Bono Innovation Fund ("PBIF"). The PBIF program awards grants to existing LSC grantees to strengthen the pro bono system and increase access to legal assistance for low-income people. Through the Pro Bono Innovation Fund, LSC will continue to expand the impact and effectiveness of our grantees .

The purpose of the Pro Bono Innovation Fund is to develop and enhance pro bono programs so that larger numbers of low-income clients can be served and the quality and effectiveness of the services clients receive is improved. The Pro Bono Innovation Fund will support projects that are innovative (new

approaches or the adaptation of existing, successful approaches) and replicable (the innovation, if successful, could likely be implemented by other legal aid programs).

The goals of the Pro Bono Innovation Fund are to:

1. Address gaps in the delivery of legal services to low-income people.
2. Engage more lawyers and other volunteers in pro bono service.
3. Develop and implement new, innovative, and replicable strategies that address persistent challenges in pro bono delivery systems.

In April 2014, LSC published a [Notice of Funds Availability](#) (NOFA) to solicit applications for funding through the Pro Bono Innovation Fund.

In September 2014, LSC announced the inaugural class of PBIF awardees. A total of 11 LSC grantees received PBIF grants to support projects that will develop replicable innovations in pro bono services for low-income clients.

Many of the projects use emerging legal aid technology to reach rural populations. Others create extensive pro bono partnerships with local law schools, community organizations, and corporate attorneys. All the projects seek to engage and recruit pro bono lawyers and other volunteers to leverage LSC's federal funding and increase the resources available to low-income clients. Projects are expected to last from 18 to 24 months.

LSC will evaluate the projects funded through the Pro Bono Innovation Fund to identify the types of approaches that have the greatest potential to accomplish the initiative's goals and objectives. To that end, LSC seeks to retain the services of a consultant or consulting firm that has expertise and experience in independently evaluating the impact and effectiveness of a grant program.

III. Evaluation of LSC's Pro Bono Innovation Fund Program

The successful grant program evaluator will design a comprehensive evaluation system focused on qualitative and quantitative outcomes to assess the effectiveness of LSC's PBIF grant program.

Evaluation Activities

The evaluator(s) will design and implement an evaluation of the projects funded through the Pro Bono Innovation Fund and produce a report with the evaluation findings and recommendations for future Pro Bono Innovation Fund initiatives and/or other LSC pro bono initiatives.

Major evaluation activities and strategies include the following:

1. *Development of an evaluation plan and methodology evaluation.* Activities will include:
 - (a) Analyzing information regarding pro bono initiatives currently conducted by LSC grantees, other legal services providers and the private bar;
 - (b) Reviewing the applications and proposed project outcomes submitted in response to the Pro Bono Innovation Fund RFP;
 - (c) Analyzing the designs and findings of evaluations of pro bono initiatives conducted by LSC grantees, other legal services providers, and the private bar, if available;

- (d) Identifying the data sets that Pro Bono Innovation Fund grantees should be required to compile for the evaluation and the formats in which those data should be reported;
 - (e) Developing data collection instruments (e.g., survey designs);
 - (f) Developing a draft evaluation plan for review and comment by LSC staff; and,
 - (g) Developing the final evaluation plan based on comments by LSC staff.
- 2. *Conduct evaluation of PBIF projects.* Activities will include:
 - (a) Drafting communications to the Pro Bono Innovation Fund grantees regarding the evaluation's purpose and process;
 - (b) Conducting, compiling, and analyzing data from onsite reviews of Pro Bono Innovation Fund grantees and surveys of and interviews with grantees or other stakeholders;
 - (c) Compiling and analyzing data submitted by grantees and data obtained from other sources (e.g., informal consultations, evaluations conducted by other entities);
 - (d) Making appropriate modifications in the evaluation design, as necessary;
- 3. *Prepare a (preliminary and final) report summarizing the results of the evaluation with recommendations on how the PBIF program could be improved.* Activities will include:
 - (a) Producing a mid-cycle report, which summarizes the evaluation's preliminary results;
 - (b) Producing a draft final report, which includes:
 - 1) Description of methodologies used in the evaluation;
 - 2) Analytical summary of the data collected through items 2.(b) and 2.(c);
 - 3) Assessment of viability, effectiveness, and efficiency of the approaches implemented by grantees in achieving the PBIF's goals and objectives;
 - 4) A summary of the lessons learned from the projects funded through the PBIF;
 - 5) *A list of best practices associated with strong and successful grant programs;*
 - 6) Recommendation for future Pro Bono Innovation Fund initiatives and/or other LSC pro bono initiatives; and,
 - 7) Recommendations for improving the PBIF evaluation system; and,
 - 8) Appendices with the evaluation instruments and data collected from all sources.
 - (c) Producing a final report based on LSC feedback.

IV. Deliverables

- 1. Kick-off Meeting.
Evaluation Methodology. The evaluation design should (1) identify the evaluation methodologies and data sets, the major activities of the evaluation process, and the timelines for their implementation and (2) provide the rationale for the design structure, activities, and methodologies, which should reflect the results of the activities set forth in items 1.(a)-(f) above.
 - a. Draft evaluation methodology
 - b. Final evaluation methodology
- 2. Data Collection Tool
- 3. Periodic check-in and written status updates on a quarterly basis.
- 4. Mid-cycle preliminary report
- 5. Draft Final Report
- 6. Final Report

V. Period of Performance

It is anticipated that the period of performance for this contract will be from March 31, 2015 to September 30, 2016.

VI. Proposal Requirements

A. Firm and Key Personnel Qualifications: LSC seeks the services of consultants with demonstrated expertise and experience in conducting evaluations.

Experience and expertise in the following areas are essential:

1. Design and implementation of evaluations conducted by and for large grant-making organizations
2. Design and implementation of systems for the collection and analysis of evaluation data;
3. Production of comprehensive reports which cogently and clearly describe evaluation designs, major analytical findings, and key recommendations;
4. Facilitation of work with a wide range of institutional stakeholders.

Please provide examples of experience and expertise in these areas, samples of comparable work, and résumés for the key personnel involved in the project..

B. Management: Provide a work plan for completing this project. Include an estimate of the labor hours anticipated to complete each phase of work.

C. Cost: Provide a budget for this project, including direct and indirect costs and expenses (including travel). Rates, whether fixed, daily, or hourly, must include all overhead costs and profit. If non-fixed rates are proposed, the proposal must estimate the total number of days or hours the applicant expects to bill for the project. The proposal should include a cost-not-to-exceed limit, subject to properly executed extensions or modifications.

D. References: Provide professional references (including full contact information) concerning the applicant's performance on three (3) comparable, recent projects.

VII. Proposal Format and Administrative Requirements

A. Proposal Format

Please submit proposals electronically, preferably in Word or PDF format. Fold-outs for charts, tables and/or spreadsheets are permitted. Proposals should be straightforward and concise – and not exceed ten (10) pages (single spaced), not including a cover letter, résumés, background materials, and examples of previous related work.

B. Delivery of Proposals

Proposals must be received by LSC no later than 5:30 P.M., EST, on March 16, 2015. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated on a rolling basis, and LSC may select a successful candidate prior to the close of the application period. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to apply as soon as possible.

Please submit all proposals – and direct any related inquiries regarding this RFP to:

Mytrang Nguyen, Program Counsel
Legal Services Corporation

3333 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20007
Phone: (202) 295-1500
Email: nguyenm@lsc.gov

Applicants are required to indicate whether they qualify as a small, disadvantaged business under section 8(a) of the Small Business Act (13 CFR 124).

Applicants are solely responsible for ensuring that Proposals are delivered on time. Late proposals will not be accepted. Delays caused by any delivery service will not be grounds for extension of the proposal due date and time. Late received proposals (either the hard copies or the PDF) may be returned unopened to the Applicant at LSC's sole discretion.

C. Cost of Proposal: All costs incurred in preparing Proposals shall be borne by the applicant. Any final contract awarded will not provide for costs of the proposal to the applicant.

D. Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and associated LSC regulations may require LSC to release to the public upon request certain third-party bid proposals. LSC will not, however, release a proposal that would cause competitive harm to the applicant. If your proposal is requested under FOIA, LSC will contact you before releasing it in whole or in part. Applicants are encouraged to label documents containing sensitive business and confidential information as such at the time of submission.

E. Miscellaneous

Minor procedural or administrative exceptions to the requirements contained in this RFP may be made by LSC during the proposal review process. LSC may disqualify or reject any or all proposals. LSC reserves the right to have and retain all original data and working papers generated during the Project.

LSC reserves the right to award the contract to the applicant with the best overall approach, regardless of cost, or to not award a contract to any applicant. Nothing in the RFP or this process creates any applicant's rights.